© *Academy of Management Discoveries*
2015, Vol. 1, No. 2, 150–164.
Online only
http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amd.2014.0016

CONTAGIOUS OFFSITE WORK AND THE LONELY OFFICE: THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF DISTRIBUTED WORK

KEVIN W. ROCKMANN
George Mason University

MICHAEL G. PRATT
Boston College

Research in the area of offsite work arrangements (telework, remote work, etc.) has generally been focused on understanding how the experience of being offsite changes work attitudes and performance. What has been largely neglected is an investigation of how offsite work changes the experience of being in the onsite office. In a qualitative study of a *Fortune 100* company on the forefront of allowing offsite work, we examine how the prevalence of offsite working arrangements influences perceptions of the onsite office as well as decisions regarding where one works. We find that individuals desire a co-located office environment as an opportunity for both social ties and work collaborations. In this distributed organization, however, that opportunity is largely not present. Individuals are working offsite not only for many traditionally known reasons but also because of how they imagine others are making their work location decisions. In this way, offsite work is seemingly spreading in a contagious way: individuals choose to work offsite as coworkers are choosing to work offsite, a finding we support in a follow-up quantitative study. We suggest that work in this area refocus to include contagion effects of offsite work and the potential for negative effects of working in a depopulated onsite office.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/de27be4a-6c2f-11e5-8171-ba1968cf791a.html#axzz3p1m2kovS

http://www.humanresourcesonline.net/worst-part-working-home/

"During the course of the twentieth century the workplace became increasingly associated with the office building, so that by the end of the century the two concepts had become almost synonymous" (Harrison, Wheeler, & Whitehead, 2004: 20).

"The office as we know it is dead. To be certain, there will always been some operations which will require the obligatory cubicle farms. But increasingly the more successful business folk are those who are able to be more responsive, keep their costs low while being able to work [with] their clients, balance the necessities of picking up their kids from school, [all] while maintaining a family household" (Lutz, 2013).

Copyright of the Academy of Management, all rights reserved. Contents may not be copied, emailed, posted to a listserv, or otherwise transmitted without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, or email articles for individual use only.

Although co-located onsite work has long been the dominant work form, recent evidence from a variety of literature sources suggests that this dominance is being challenged (Watson-Manheim, Chudoba, & Crowston, 2002). Technology, for managing both data and communication, has been widely adopted, which allows organizations and their members to collaborate from increasingly distant locations. These technological advances have coincided with employees' needs for better work–life balance (Harpaz, 2002) and more job autonomy (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006); employees believe that meeting these needs will also make them more productive (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). Organization leaders seem to agree. Over the past 10 years, the percentage of teleworkers, one type of distributed workers, has increased 80 percent, with some estimates putting the total number of teleworkers above three million in the United States alone (Global Workplace Analytics, 2013). This growth has occurred as managers have adopted the notion that organizations with happier workers function better (Taris & Schreurs, 2009). In doing so, organizations have realized that by utilizing distributed work they can save money on office space (Cascio, 2000), be more efficient with office relocations (Buono & Bowditch, 2003), and more easily employ talented individuals who may live in distant locations (Cramton & Hinds, 2005).

Although these changes in employee desires and demands, organizational policies, and technologies have facilitated significant changes in how work is completed, the research on these distributed forms of work has focused primarily on two areas: the effects of telework on individual outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, autonomy, and performance) (see Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), and the effects of being distributed on team process and outcomes (Hertel, Geister, & Konradt, 2005; Kirkman, Rosen, Tesluk, & Gibson, 2004; Malhotra & Majchrzak, 2004). There has been a notable absence of the study of the onsite office itself (see Golden, 2007, for an exception), and a related absence of rich investigations into why individuals actually choose to work where they do. With the proliferation of distributed teams, global teams, collaboration through outsourcing, contract work, mergers, telework, hoteling, multiple office facilities, satellite offices, and even free Wi-Fi at coffee shops, what it means to go to work is changing. Our discovery begins with the discussion of how the intersection of flexible work practices and technology have led to the proliferation of distributed work, and the effects of those work practices on the office.

Author's voice:
What motivated you?

DISTRIBUTED WORK

Although organizations have always had distributed workers in far-flung locations, the nature and management of distributed work has changed significantly in the past few decades. Technology has allowed individuals to increasingly communicate and collaborate with others at a distance. This has in turn allowed organizations to employ individuals who are not physically co-located with coworkers as well as cater to employee requests to work from a location of their choosing. Distributed work, in this current environment, is marked by four key features that differentiate it from more traditional office work.

First, distributed work is different from more traditional office work because of the *physical distance* involved. When work is distributed, there is some degree of physical distance between individuals, and face-to-face contact is decreased. Although there is discussion about how much distance is needed to qualify work as distributed (e.g., Kraut, Fussell, Brennan, & Siegel, 2002), it seems that any time a workspace is not shared, it opens the door for collaborations to be completed without face-to-face contact.

Second, this physical distance is managed by a *reliance on communication technology*. Because of the distance and lack of face-to-face contact, distributed individuals typically have multiple communication options available to facilitate work. Technologies such as e-mail have been developed to facilitate time-lagged or asynchronous communication between distributed individuals, whereas other technologies such as videoconferencing and instant messaging have been developed to facilitate real-time, or synchronous communication between those at a distance. Other technologies such as *Google Docs* and *Dropbox* facilitate collaboration among distributed parties, whereas networking tools such as virtual private networks allow individuals to connect to secure networks even when at a distance.

A third feature defining distributed work is *reduced supervision*. Having distributed workers creates greater difficulty for management in terms of monitoring and providing instrumental management (Kurland & Egan, 1999), especially because employees dislike electronic monitoring and perceive it as unjust (Alge, 2001; Ambrose & Alder, 2000). Instead of walking around and checking on everyone, the manager must be more active, via technology, in order to track employee work. This incentivizes the manager to allow for more flexible work because to control employees via technology, all the while across some distance, is an onerous—and likely impossible—task.

Fourth, consistent with the literature on telecommuting (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) and virtual

teams (Hertel et al., 2005), distributed work requires that individuals are *interpersonally connected* with some other individuals: this could be a single person, a team, or others in an organization. In other words, to be distributed means one has to be distributed from others. Thus, a person performing the transcription of medical records at home, whose only regular interactions with the organization consist of receiving and sending the medical records, working within tightly defined rules and procedures, is more akin to traditional office rather than distributed work.

Distributed work is thus defined as work done under reduced supervision with others at some physical distance, facilitated by communication technology. Given that these are the features that define distributed work as it currently exists, our discovery is centered on implications for distributed organizations going forward. Specifically, while we know that onsite coworkers can have negative feelings toward offsite workers (Golden, 2007), we lack a clear view of what can happen to organizational offices when distributed work becomes the norm rather than the exception. For example, we have little understanding of how the anticipated presence of others changes whether individuals choose to come to work or not. To investigate these phenomena, we took one distributed organization on the forefront of distributed work and technology use and looked at what challenges an organization utilizing these types of work arrangements might face.

We engaged in an inductive study with employees spending various amounts of time working offsite, from those reporting spending none of their time offsite to those reporting spending all of their time offsite. In this distributed organization each individual has an assigned facility, but also has flexibility with regard to working offsite for some or all of the time. Further, each individual is teamed with individuals working in various locations as well as individuals who are assigned to the same facility, but who themselves have flexibility in working onsite versus offsite. Our original research question was to examine how people who spent varying amounts of time outside the office experienced distributed work. However, as is often the case with inductive research, the nature of our question changed during the research process to one focused more on the deteriorating experience of the onsite office rather than the enhanced experience of the offsite work. In investigating this phenomenon, it seemed clear that choices to work offsite were strongly influenced by the perceived loss of social and productivity benefits of being *in the office* and were made in some cases despite fundamental preferences to work onsite in a more collective environment. These dynamics have not been emphasized in previous research related to offsite work. Moreover, they are suggestive of contagion effects and tipping points in the exodus from the office, neither of which are well understood at this point.

There are two studies described in this research; studies which were implemented according to what Creswell (2003) refers to as a sequential mixed-methods strategy, whereby the second type of study is used primarily to build upon insights from the first. In this investigation, the primary, qualitative study, which contains the majority of the findings, lead to surprising results which were explored in a secondary, quantitative, study (cf., Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988).

PRIMARY STUDY

Methods

In the primary study we interviewed 29 employees at DSP (our pseudonym), a large high-tech organization in the Fortune 100 with approximately 100,000 employees worldwide. Our sampling was purposeful in that we found an organizational context where our phenomenon of interest (a range of offsite work) was most likely to be visible (Patton, 1990). DSP allows employees to work from an organizational facility of their choice (what they term as hot desking) or at home, coffee shops, or other offsite locations. In short, with few exceptions, employees are free to determine their own location of work depending on their own preferences. Not surprisingly, the organization reported that many employees took advantage of this policy by working for at least some of their time offsite.

Given our interest in the experience of distributed workers, we also purposefully sampled our respondents. Because being distributed is not a dichotomous variable (e.g., Golden, Veiga, & Dino, 2008), we examined individuals with a range of experience working offsite. Specifically, we included 9 DSP employees who reported working between 0 and 20 percent of their time offsite (less than 1 day per week), 10 who reported working between 21 and 79 percent of their time offsite (between 1 and 4 days per week), and 10 who reported working between 80 and 100 percent of their time offsite (more than 4 days per week). In addition, we can extrapolate from research that people who have been distributed for longer periods of time may experience being offsite differently. For example, people who have more experience with traditionally lean media (e.g., media that do not show nonverbal cues), such as text, are often able to communicate a richer set of cues using these media than those who do not have such experience (Carlson & Zmud, 1999); this ability, in turn,

may influence how they experience interactions with colleagues. Thus, our sample also ranged from employees with 3 months to almost 10 years of experience working offsite.

The main data source for this study was our semi-structured interviews. Although each of us was free to explore emergent issues during the course of the interview, we included common questions in every protocol about: (a) what interviewees did at work and where they did it, (b) why they worked in their current work arrangement, and (c) how they viewed themselves in terms of the people they worked with and their organization. Interviews averaged an hour and were transcribed verbatim.

Because extant theory on the experience of distributed workers exists, but is incomplete, we proceeded "by filling in what has been left out—that is by extending and refining its existing categories and relationships" (Locke, 2001: 103). We analyzed the qualitative data by traveling back and forth between the data and more abstract or generalized thinking about what was going on in our context (Locke, 2001; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We started our analysis by using open coding: identifying statements regarding how our respondents experienced the world. In this case, their distributed work arrangements were the basis for creating thematic or recurring statements in the form of tentative or provisional categories or codes (Locke, 2001). For example, we created a code for "Where is everyone?" to discuss respondents' experienced disconnection with others from whom they were separated. We bundled similar codes into broader and more abstract categories (i.e., axial coding) such as "work location motivations." As coding progressed, we revisited the data to see which, if any, matched our emerging understanding of that category. If data appeared to be misaligned with emerging categories, the latter were either revised or dropped. We also followed up on emerging insights in subsequent interviews (Spradley, 1979).[1]

As is often the case in inductive research, our research question changed and was refined during the iterative process of data collection and analysis. In particular, Spradley (1979) suggests that inductive researchers pay attention to the key problems or issues facing the group they are studying and not to overly privilege what they think is important before engaging in research (i.e., the initial research questions). What became clear was that our informants were struggling with their views of onsite work, rather than offsite work. Moreover, we were intrigued by how they made decisions regarding whether to work in the onsite office. We begin with the latter theme as it introduces the changing nature of onsite office work at DSP.

Working Offsite at DSP: Choices and Constraints

As noted, we chose DSP because this company had a widespread policy of letting employees work offsite. It became quickly apparent that our respondents believed that (a) it was not only officially, but also unofficially, permissible to work offsite and (b) that people often chose to work offsite for many of the reasons traditionally found in the literature, such as work–life balance (Kossek et al., 2006). With regard to the general sentiments about the permissibility of working offsite, one participant who worked exclusively offsite noted:

> DSP has chosen [to] enable employees to work at home. So I have never had a problem requesting to work from home. Generally, I don't even need to tell my managers that I am working from home. [They are] ok with whatever you do as long as you get your job done. [1106 − 100%][2]

At the other end of the spectrum, a worker who spent most of his or her time in the onsite office similarly noted, "There is no pressure to stay, there is no pressure to go. I mean . . . there is no pressure at this point. I mean, it's up to the way you want to manage [where you work]" [1204 − 20%]. Overall, our data suggest that individuals were largely free to work offsite.

When asked whether they took advantage of the opportunity to work offsite and why, many of the answers were consistent with what is found in scholarly and practitioners' writings on the topic. Decisions about working onsite versus offsite revolved largely around job demands (e.g., need flexibility to make early morning teleconference) and/or to manage work–life demands (e.g., I want to be able to take my kids to school). Evidence of these themes can be found in Table 1.

However, another major motive in deciding where to work involved the anticipated presence of others.

[1] Given the limited time allowed to us in this context, we were unable to fully engage in the grounded theory process. In particular, due to the constraints on data collection imposed by the organization, we were unable to change our sampling based on our emerging ideas (i.e., shift from purposeful to conceptual). However, we were able to discuss and analyze data during data collection. Finally, given *AMD*'s emphasis on pretheoretical findings, we do not develop a full theoretical model; rather we discuss the findings from our open and axial coding.

[2] Numbers refer to the unique numerical code assigned to each participant in our study. The percentage is how frequently they reported working offsite—outside their assigned organizational facility.

TABLE 1
Traditional Reasons for Working Offsite

Evidence	Traditional Reason for Working Offsite
For example, [last night] I worked really late but . . . didn't get a chance to go to the store so I am taking a 2-hour lunch [today] . . . [Those that] feel more comfortable with that kind of flexibility tend to do well at home and they also want to work at home. [1004 − 70%]	Job requires increased flexibility
But then work gets done everywhere from [Town #1] to [Town #2] depending on which buildings I go to . . .. Lately a lot of my projects have been all over . . . and then every now and then I just work from home because it is easy and convenient to just stay there if I have a mid-morning meeting . . .. So I think that [flexibility] is kind of a nice advantage . . . another advantage is just people can have a more full life it feels like. [1108 − 30%]	
I work with a worldwide team so I have total flexibility over my hours. So just in this past week I have been working as early as 7 am and as late as 10 pm. So I can divvy up my day the way I need to. [1101 − 30%]	
So when I work from home it is easier for me to do certain things with my family. And I can have holes in the day. [1207 − 66%]	Enhanced ability to balance work–life demands
So, if I had an idea or just feel like working at that point, I can easily do that, rather than having to come in the office and . . . have that drive. I can work in, you know, personal life. The life balance . . . is much more easily attained because of that flexibility. [1103 − 60%]	
So I would say that I benefit [when offsite] from having a calmer work life balance and knowing that I can still deliver on projects and be just as involved in projects as I would be if I was in the office. [1003 − 90%]	

Specifically, interviewees talked about how working with others at the onsite office made some aspects of their job easier (e.g., getting information), while also serving important social needs. These social reasons were mentioned by participants ranging from those spending a lot of time in the onsite office to relatively little. To begin, people who came into the office often did so because they wanted social interaction. As one interviewee who spent most of his time in the office noted:

> [When at home], you don't get the, as you walk in, "How was your weekend?" "Oh that's great." At work you just finish something kind of big and you just swing your chair around, you know what is going on. "Can I see the price ad in the [city] news?" And, "You know let's go to lunch." Somebody brings in, the desk across from mine is the goody table, so somebody brings in coffee cake this morning, candy, whatever, you get the impromptu meetings of somebody grabbing something you just say hi. [1211 − 10%]

Another employee who only worked about a third of his or her workweek offsite noted the productivity advantages of coming into the office. If you have to pick up the phone or e-mail someone, you have to extend extra effort:

> If you are sitting in the office next to somebody and just get this idea, pops in your head, and you want to bounce it off somebody [you are able to] . . . picking up a phone is a lot, suddenly it is more important. Writing an e-mail becomes more formal. And so I think that you lose a little bit of that instantaneous kind of collaboration and that just bouncing ideas off and so I think that there is, I don't know how you get that [now]. Now instant messaging maybe could fill that gap in but I see it as, I personally don't like it. It annoys me. [1101 − 30%]

In addition, those offsite complained about missing out on the same work-related and social elements of being co-located with their colleagues at the onsite office. One reminisced about the productive relationship he had with his supervisor before choosing to work primarily offsite:

> Whenever he needed something he could just toss it over the wall and I can help him with it. That helps me get more opportunities on things that he needed help with, brainstorm with him and get that visibility. But if I was [offsite] that wouldn't happen. [1106 − 100%]

Others noted that working nearly exclusively outside the office meant little human interaction:

> I find I get lonely, you know. You can only yak at your cats for so long. And I need the social interaction from work. And another reason I'll drive down here for meetings and so forth, is to just interject the human element from work in. [1305 − 100%]

This social element was even in play for those who split their time more evenly:

> What I am saying there, I miss having at least one day where I know I am going to come into the office and I am going to sit down with my colleagues and talk about their experiences. [1207 − 50%]

Thus, on the face of it—and consistent with extant thinking—we expected that people who worked onsite were able to get their social needs met and thus were less likely to experience the isolation often associated with remote workers (Cooper & Kurland, 2002). However, this was not the case. In fact, people complained about not having relevant others in the office with whom to interact. Thus, it soon became clear that no matter what percentage of their time they worked offsite, people at DSP saw working onsite as being very similar to working offsite. There were a few reasons for viewing onsite and offsite work as similar. One reason was due to the fact that even people at the onsite office can be occupied, thus one might need to e-mail a boss who is busy even if you are both co-located.

> There are things that I get resolved by just walking down to my manager and asking for help, which I couldn't do at home of course. But even then there are times when I walk down and she might be on the phone and I might not be able to talk to her all day long and the best way is to e-mail. So in that respect I see no difference [between being offsite and being onsite]. [1204 − 20%]

In addition, the DSP onsite office complex was large enough that individuals could be on the same team but located in different buildings:

> Of the people [I work with], I think only one person is actually in the same building...The other people are in different buildings. So even [working onsite] is a sort of distributed environment. [1003 − 90%]

However, a major reason for viewing onsite and offsite work as similar was because of the number of people at DSP who worked at home. As one interviewee noted, "I can come in on some days and never see anybody on my team that is local because they are usually working at home or [are on a] business trip" [1001 − 50%]. Similarly, another noted, "Also it is sometimes [that] you come in and find out everyone else is working at home and you are the only [one] in the office then." [1211 − 10%]

These latter comments, in particular, spurred us to focus on this phenomenon of how individuals perceived the onsite office. Moreover, it led us to discover a new reason for why people work offsite.

Author's voice:
What was the most difficult aspect of your research?

The Changing Nature of the Onsite Office and Why Some Choose to Work Elsewhere

Several people commented that the nature of the onsite office was different now that many people chose to work offsite. In particular, it was clear that the version of the onsite office where coworkers socialize and brainstorm no longer existed. As a manager who spent most of his or her time working at home noted, "I do miss the old model where you would have a really close group of face-to-face people where you would go out to lunch from time to time or celebrate birthdays; and that kind of thing and that doesn't happen anymore" [1003 − 90%]. Similarly, another worker noted, "The concept of 'Hey, let's go out for lunch today' doesn't exist" [1001 − 50%]. The work-related benefits of working onsite also seemed diminished. One manager noted that in some ways, teamwork no longer existed at DSP:

> [Being] remote makes it hard to have the spontaneous dynamic interactive discussions in the hallway: "How are things going?", "How are you doing?", "Heard about this, what do you think?" Because people are spread out and working from home, we don't have a sense of team...that we might have had in an old traditional organization back in the 70s or 80s. ...So in that sense we really don't have teamwork per se. [1001 − 50%]

This sentiment was echoed by an employee who felt that he was not really part of a team:

> Sometimes I think I probably would have more sense of being on a team; I don't really have a lot of team kind of interactions even when I am in the office. [1306 − 80%]

To be clear, DSP is a large company, so onsite offices were never entirely abandoned. However, what was missing was the presence of close coworkers and team members—what we refer to as relevant others. In other words, there were people in the office, just not people you knew well or who had information you were likely to need. The net result was that the office became more impersonal, and by consequence, a lonelier place to work. This sentiment was echoed strongly by people who spent most of their time at DSP onsite offices:

> ... you don't get the hallway conversations, you don't get to hear the spur of the moment kind of things that are happening. *So people may not know your face. They may know your name but they don't know your face.* [1203 − 15%; emphasis ours]

> The social aspects have really changed a lot, so, well there's not a lot of chitchat around at work time anymore, like there used to be. ... You know, you used to have, you know, established

> friendships and stuff at work that were a lot more close. You'd go out after work, things like that. Go to lunch more often with them. And now it's just come to work, do your work, and leave. . . . *It's not as friendly to come to work now. It's a lot more just work.* [1103 − 30%; emphasis ours]

In short, the onsite office was isolated not because of lack of people, but because it was impersonal. That is, without relevant others (i.e., close colleagues and team members), the office no longer met social or productivity needs. In this way being at the office was akin to working regularly in a coffee shop—surrounded by people that you might recognize, but do not really know.

In addition to these changes in perceptions of the office were changes in why people chose to work elsewhere. A major reason that people did not come into the onsite office was that they believed that no one else they cared about, or worked with, would be there. This was true along the range of how often one worked offsite:

> So, what's happening, you know, is many, many people are actually working more and more at home. So that advantage of sort of coming into the office is kind of decreasing in a way . . . you don't know who's going to be there. And maybe the people that you have a rapport with [pause] maybe that is the day they choose to work at home. [1101 − 30%]

> If you don't know day-to-day what [the] work experience is going to be . . . you don't know who is here and who is not then there is less . . . point to come in. Less productive to come in, in fact you just waste travel time. [1207 − 66%]

Taken together, our primary study suggests the following. Workers in this company were taking advantage of the flexible work policies to work outside the office. At the same time, though they still wanted an office where they could socialize and get work done. A tipping point had occurred at DSP whereby workers could not have it both ways: one could not enjoy the traditional benefits of a co-located office because too many people worked offsite. In fact, because people recognized this new reality, they were often more motivated to work offsite because coming into the office was "pointless," thus exacerbating the situation. We provide additional evidence for these findings in Table 2.

Author's voice:
How did the paper evolve?

The people who suffered the most of this new reality were those who were left behind—those who worked in impersonal offices occupied by faceless strangers.

The finding that people were motivated to work at home because others were making a similar choice is intriguing because it raises the possibility that distributed work can take on a life of its own. This process begins with an individual's choice to take advantage of company policy/mandate or managerial approval to work outside the office. First, that individual gets to work from home, coffee shop, or other location of their choosing. Second, that individual's choice increases the distribution of the entire office, changing the experience of going to the office for those work onsite. Third, when enough people do this, the office may go through a tipping point where it becomes not desirable to work onsite, driving other individuals to start working offsite. That is, choices that some people make about coming into the office could be influencing other people's choices. This suggests that working offsite could be contagious—once coworkers work offsite the motivation to come to the onsite office is reduced, impacting yet another group of individuals. However, as we could not generalize this particular finding across DSP with the limited number of individuals in the qualitative study, we followed up with a secondary, survey-based study with two additional samples at DSP.

SECONDARY STUDY

Methods

The first sample for the secondary study was created using different individuals, but within the same unit of DSP as the primary study, a unit performing primarily information technology (IT) support services. Although DSP has offices throughout North America, the unit in which we collected data for this sample is headquartered in California, and most of the respondents who work in this unit live in California. Mean organizational tenure in this sample was just over 12 years, and the sample was 69 percent male. To gather participants for this sample, an e-mail was sent to all employees in the division by one of the division managers. Of the approximately 750 employees in the division, 242 responses were received, for a response rate of 32 percent.

The second sample for the secondary study was created by drawing upon multiple units across all of DSP North America. To gather participants, a representative from the DSP human resources department selected a random sample of 2,000 individuals. The participants held a wide variety of jobs, ranging from

TABLE 2
Primary Study Findings

Evidence	Finding
There hasn't been a real demand for me to be in the office . . .. So I am not required to do the smiley face for my manager. [1203 − 15%]	Office norms around work location flexibility
DSP does give you a flexible schedule . . . remote access allows you to [not] be here on the clock at this [specific] time and it is nice to be able to, let's say, if I have to leave at 3:00 I can do so and finish the work that I need to. [It's also nice to] have all the access of speed and everything that I would have if I was in the office. [1210 − 35%]	
I would like to do more work at home . . .. I think DSP [has] been more supportive of people working in [an offsite] environment. [1202 − 5%]	
Yeah, I definitely miss not being able to [talk] face to face because . . . you can get more meaning sometimes from face to face [communication]. [1206 − 20%]	Office seen as critical to meeting social and collaborative needs
[M]y worry [is about] going too far to where you're working out of your home or whatever for instance . . . that you miss out on a lot of that discussion over lunch . . . you miss out on the informal communication. [1209 − 20%]	
But I think, I do feel like it is sort of a disadvantage to have people really isolated . . . you lose that personal feeling and I think there is something to be said when you are working with a team to really be able to know each other and interact with [them]. [1108 − 30%]	
It is a trade-off, because obviously you're, you can be happier because you have flexibility [offsite] and so forth. But, if you were in an office with other people, you have more social interaction and more of, more of [a sense of] team. [1103 − 60%]	
Because if everybody is working at home, you can't tell where they are. It's very difficult to [manage] that. And some things are a lot better done in person, where we don't have things like video conferencing to peoples' homes or that sort of thing. It can be very difficult to [connect in this way] in an environment other than the office. [1208 − 15%]	
In past jobs I have had face to face [contact which] has been really critical. But we are more offsite now and I can't be face to face with everyone anyway so it . . . lends itself to going home. [1206 − 20%]	Result: People working offsite because others are working offsite
Cause it has really changed over the years when we started off, everyone was located in the same building . . . Nowadays . . . people are located everywhere across the United States . . .. I mean, there's no, there's no reason to come [into the office] usually. [1103 − 60%]	
It has been clear more and more that the people I work with are not the ones in the office. They are the ones on the phone with me. And so other people on my team have begun to work more and more at home. [1307 − 70%]	

administrative and financial to engineering and technical support. Each of the selected individuals was sent an invitation e-mail from a DSP human resources representative asking for their participation in the study. In total, 386 completed the survey for a response rate of 19 percent. Although this is somewhat below the average response rate for organizational surveys (Baruch & Holtom, 2008), there are at least three reasons why this is the case. This organization surveys their population frequently (Weiner & Delassio, 2006); this organization was also in the process of moving several units and thus employees were likely busier than normal, and these employees may not have trusted an external survey website, as indicated by several comments back to the survey administrator at DSP.

Measures

Reasons for working offsite. To explore why individuals spend time working offsite (versus onsite), we designed a set of choices with the goal of understanding why individuals were working at least part of their time outside their assigned organizational facility. The introduction to this set of options stated, "If you work some of the time outside of your assigned organizational facility, which of the following contributed to your working this way? Check all that apply." This was followed by six options generated from the distributed work literature and from the findings of the primary study: "It helps me manage my work and family demands"; "It will likely facilitate my career progression"; "It makes my job more satisfying"; "It allows me to get more work done"; "Few people (if any) from my team work in the office much, so I do not benefit from coming in"; and "My manager does not work in the office much, so I do not benefit by coming in." For the second sample a seventh option was added, "I am a member of a virtual or global team." This was included to help distinguish whether individuals were working offsite because of physical

Author's voice:
Were there any surprises in your research?

constraints (e.g., located in a different country than his or her onsite office), or because other team members were choosing to work offsite. Each of these options was coded with a 1 if chosen by the respondent as a reason to work offsite and 0 if not chosen.

Time spent offsite. To assess the time a participant spent working offsite (versus onsite), we asked two separate questions. In the first sample, following similar approaches to measuring the work environment (e.g., Golden et al., 2008), we asked individuals about the percentage of time they spend each week, on average, working offsite, away from their assigned organizational facility. For this item they were given a scale from 0 to 100 percent of the time and could select at 5 percent intervals. In the second sample we assessed offsite work by asking individuals to report directly the number of hours they spend each week working onsite and offsite. From the reporting of hours we then calculated the percentage of time they spend offsite as a fraction of the total number of hours they spend working each week. To check for consistency, we also asked the percentage question from the first sample ("What is the percentage of time you spend, each week, on average, working offsite"). The means in the second sample for the percentage question (mean = 40.80) and the hours question (mean = 40.13) were quite similar and the results were consistent using both measures.

Results

The finding from the primary study that we wished to explore in the secondary study concerned the reasons why individuals choose to work offsite versus onsite. To explore these reasons for working onsite versus offsite, the six (Sample 1) and seven (Sample 2) reasons for working offsite were entered into a regression model predicting the frequency of time spent offsite. The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 3, which shows the regression coefficients for all reasons. Supporting what was found in the primary study the strongest reason related to whether individuals spend time offsite is the following: "Few people (if any) from my team work in the office much, so I do not benefit from coming in" (Sample 1: mean = 0.75; $\beta = 0.17$, $p < .05$; Sample 2: mean = 0.29; $\beta = 0.45$, $p < .001$). This suggests that a strong component of one's decision to come into the office or not is based on where one's coworkers choose to work. Although there were no other significant predictors in the first sample, in the second sample three other significant predictors of time spent offsite were "It helps me manage work and family demands" (mean = 0.63, $\beta = -0.20$, $p < .001$), "It allows me to get more work done" (mean = 0.67, $\beta = 0.12$, $p < .05$), and "It makes my job more satisfying" (mean = 0.43, $\beta = 0.10$, $p < .05$). Also, in both the first sample (mean = 0.86) and the second sample (mean = 0.67) the most frequent option chosen was that "It allows me to get more work done." This suggests that of all the reasons listed the most people agree that being offsite allows for more work to get done, but that belief does not drive the reason to work offsite versus onsite.

Further, as we discovered between collecting the first sample and the second sample, one of the additional reasons why one's coworkers may not be present onsite is because he or she is assigned to virtual or global teams where individuals are assigned to nonproximal offices. Although we did not ask specifically whether coworkers were offsite because of their own choosing, we did ask in the second sample whether being a member of a virtual or global team contributed to respondents working offsite versus onsite. This also was significantly related to time spent offsite (mean = 0.35; $\beta = 0.11$, $p < .05$), suggesting that team structure also plays a significant role in determining whether these individuals choose to work onsite versus offsite.

In sum, this secondary study supported our qualitative discovery that a major motive for working offsite is knowing whether one's coworkers were going to be in the onsite office. In fact, this motive was the one most strongly related to one's choice of where to work, even when compared with more traditional motives (e.g., "It allows me to get more work done" and "It makes my job more satisfying") and whether one's manager will be working onsite.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

We opened this investigation with questions regarding the experiences of those who work offsite to varying degrees. Following the existing literature, we postulated that those who work offsite more often would experience work in significantly different and important ways compared with those who remain largely onsite. We began by seeking to understand those differences qualitatively. What we found, however, was that our assumptions (and those in the literature that guided these assumptions) of what a distributed organization looks like were perhaps out of date. Our insights were threefold and are summarized in Table 4.

To begin, we entered with the assumption that the more frequently one worked offsite, the more isolated one would feel from one's workplace and coworkers. Our assumption turned out to be largely inaccurate, because as individuals begin to work offsite, everyone in the organization becomes more distributed from each other. Although Golden (2007) suggested that relationships between teleworkers

TABLE 3
Employee Reasons for Working Offsite and Employee Time Spent Offsite

	Employee Time Spent Offsite					
	Sample 1			Sample 2		
Employee Reason for Working Offsite	**Mean**	**SD**	***β***	**Mean**	**SD**	***β***
Few people (if any) from my team work in the office much, so I do not benefit from coming in.	0.75	0.43	0.17*	0.29	0.45	0.45***
My manager does not work in my office much, so I do not benefit by coming in.	0.54	0.50	0.10	0.20	0.40	0.05
It allows me to get more work done.	0.86	0.35	−0.04	0.67	0.47	0.12*
It helps me manage work and family demands.	0.74	0.44	0.01	0.63	0.48	−0.20***
I am a member of a virtual or global team.	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.35	0.48	0.11*
It makes my job more satisfying.	0.67	0.47	0.03	0.43	0.49	0.10*
It will likely facilitate my career progression.	0.09	0.28	−0.03	0.05	0.22	0.03
	N		242	N		386
	R^2		0.06	R^2		0.33
	F		2.45*	F		26.63***

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

and their colleagues are strained, our findings put these results within a larger context, suggesting that tensions that exist may be based on unmet expectations by the work environment. In our primary study, our informants want onsite work to be a place that is both social and productive. But we argue, based on evidence from DSP, that once a certain number of individuals are working offsite, everyone is isolated. Thus our first discovery was that distribution is a property of the entire group, not just a subset of individuals. Organizational colocation is, in essence, a fixed pie: the more others work away from a central location, the fewer people there are left to be colocated with. Although focusing solely on the offsite worker may have been more appropriate 10 or 15 years ago when few people were offsite, it seems less appropriate now that this number has grown and offsite work essentially affects everyone.

This leads us to our next discovery: offsite work is not only an organizational property, it is also contagious. Only by looking at offsite work in this way do motivations such as those we found here make sense. As noted in the primary study and supported in the secondary study, some workers who would normally work onsite decided to work offsite rather than face an empty (of relevant people) office. This was surprising because most extant literature suggests that individuals choose to work offsite primarily for better work–life balance (Kossek et al., 2006; Shamir & Salomon, 1985) and/or because they believe it will increase their productivity (McCloskey & Igbaria, 1998), both of which should contribute to general job satisfaction (Dubrin, 1991). What these traditional motives often miss is that, at least in our study, the choice of where to work is not only about doing or even liking one's job but those around you also provide important opportunities for social interaction. Although perhaps this dual nature of onsite work is obvious in retrospect, these two (possibly competing) motives have received relatively short shrift in the literature regarding the motivations for working remotely. In this organization, it appears that as the number of distributed workers reached a certain point, the social motivation becomes very difficult to fulfill: even though workers were *willing* to go to the office for social contact, the current arrangements made such contact unlikely. Further, the contagious nature of offsite work, or "spread of something within a social system" (Strang & Soule, 1998: 266), came directly from escaping adverse conditions created by other people's choices—a motivation not often cited in the diffusion or the distributed work literature.

This raises a larger issue of how many people need to be distributed before such motivations kick in. In the period during which this study was concluded, it was clear that the organization was so far down the road of distributed work that there was no easy way to get everyone back in the office. But we know that many organizations do have a central facility and a subset of distributed individuals. This suggests that at some point between an organization initializing the use of distributed teams, telework flexibility, and so forth, there is a tipping point: a moment in time

TABLE 4
Discoveries and Implications

What Research Suggests	What We Found	Implication
Offsite workers should perceive more social isolation.	All workers had similar perceptions of isolation.	Need to stop focusing on the experience of offsite work and acknowledge the change in the nature of onsite work—that distribution of workers is a characteristic of the entire collective.
Motivation for working offsite involves the desire for flexibility in when and where work is performed and to balance work and family demands.	Most significant reason for not coming into the office is because no one else is there.	Distributed work is contagious and can spread through the organization.
Offices are perceived to still offer some advantages over working offsite.	The nature of the office has changed. It is no longer "privileged" as it seemingly offers little advantage over working anywhere else.	Need to more seriously consider how flexible work policies allowing for offsite work affect those working onsite. In addition research needs to look at how the office is now perceived.

when the nature of the organizational facility changes from having distributed individuals and groups to having a distributed workforce. What defines this tipping point is the lack of enough physically present coworkers to motivate individuals to come to the office. As this number falls, choices to work offsite would seemingly increase at an increasing rate until you have an organizational system akin to what we see at DSP.

Our final discovery builds on the previous two and builds from the assumption we had that working in the office still held some advantage over working offsite. Indeed, research on distributed work suggests that people working offsite suffer in terms of being out of sight and out of mind and thus having to work harder to be noticed and to garner promotions. However, such research is still based on a model where the bulk of people work onsite and people outside of work are satellites. Such an assumption disappears if there is no core of people working in the same place. Moreover, as evidenced by our respondents, there is still the desire to have an office where people: (a) can help you work more productively and (b) can serve social needs (e.g., going out to lunch). However, as organizations become more distributed and choices to work offsite become contagious, workers find themselves alone in a crowd, surrounded by people but not gaining any meaningful social contact in the onsite office. Taken together, these findings contribute to ongoing debates about the value of offices and the benefits of working offsite.

On the one hand, as noted in our introduction and second epigraph, technology trends and worker needs seem to be evolving together to make distributed work the way of the future. This has led some to wonder about the death of the office and whether the future of work is working offsite (Hardy, 2011). On the other hand, people still appear to desire something like a traditional office. In our study, even people who worked largely offsite still miss the social and work benefits of the old office. It is perhaps this latter insight that has prompted the slowing in the increase in the rate of distributed work forms such as telework (Global Workplace Analytics, 2013). Companies such as Best Buy (Pepitone, 2013) and Yahoo! have in fact recently changed their telework policies (Smith, 2013). Here is an excerpt of a letter sent to Yahoo! employees:

> To become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side-by-side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices. Some of the best decisions and insights come from hallway and cafeteria discussions, meeting new people, and impromptu team meetings. Speed and quality are often sacrificed when we work from home. We need to be one Yahoo!, and that starts with physically being together. (Smith, 2013)

Yahoo! management, led by CEO Marissa Mayer, argues that physical colocation is critical for company success via the building of relationships and increased collaborations. Although not the organization studied here, from reports it seems as if Yahoo! was operating in a way quite similar to DSP and understood what was happening to its offices. The results here, along with examples such as those of Best Buy and Yahoo! show that, as a field, we have only begun to scratch the surface of the far-reaching effects of allowing workers to work outside the office.

To illustrate by extrapolating from our findings, if individuals value and/or expect certain social contact in the office and fail to find that, they are likely to view the job and organization more negatively. One possibility is that part of the expectations contained

in the psychological contract of the employee is about what it means to work in a team. In particular, individuals may assume that being assigned a team means that proximal contact is likely—or at least a possibility. Such expectations are especially likely for individuals who work primarily at an onsite office. When that expectation is violated, a breach may be perceived (Rousseau, 1995). These findings call into question the practice of rewarding workers by allowing them to work offsite (WorldatWork, 2013). If done in sufficient numbers, this practice may have the inadvertent effect of violating the psychological contracts or leading to perceptions of injustice, of those who are left behind onsite.

In addition, these findings call into question what has been driving the positive effects of job satisfaction for offsite workers (i.e., are people who leave really satisfied or simply less miserable than those who remain?). Remote work is often touted as an organizational benefit because of the increase in job satisfaction for the remote worker (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Our respondents stated the same thing: "[Being offsite] is a great gift. This is like working on your farm in a way, working out of your home, working interactively, different hours, this is great gift. I am very grateful" [1002 − 100%]. As summarized nicely by this individual, the argument is that offsite work, because of the increased autonomy and ability to manage work–life demands, generally increases job satisfaction over some baseline or average level—everyone else's job satisfaction stays the same (X) while the remote worker's job satisfaction increases (X + Y). Under this assumption giving the workforce the autonomy to work offsite would provide a net benefit to job satisfaction across the organization. The other possibility we raise here, though, is that the increased number of employees working offsite makes onsite work less satisfying. In this case, while those offsite might experience greater job satisfaction against the baseline (X + Y), that increase may simply reflect the fact that the baseline level has dropped. That is, the job satisfaction of those onsite may actually decrease (X − Z). If Z (decrease in job satisfaction for onsite employees) > Y (increase in job satisfaction for offsite employees), it would mean an overall decrease in the amount of job satisfaction across the organization. This raises serious questions about whether flexible work policies are positive overall, a question that has not yet been explored to a sufficient extent.

This research also raises questions about what may happen if organizations continue along the trajectory exemplified by DSP. As organizations become more and more distributed, might they move to a form whereby everyone is distributed (i.e., a truly virtual organization)? What other outcomes might there be for organizations and their members? For example, one might expect that onsite and offsite workers will be on a more level playing field when it comes to issues of impression management and promotion—especially if managers are offsite as well. As organizations shift to more purely virtual organizations, which elements of the office would be retained or lost, and which new elements might be added? For example, if work is completely untethered from an office, will individuals spend more or less time working? Alternatively, at a certain point, will there be a backlash (as seemingly evidenced at Yahoo!), whereby organizational leaders and members rediscover the importance of colocation once it is lost (Carlson, 2013)? Indeed, if we assume that the office is about more than getting work done, it also serves an important outlet for socializing, then perhaps an increase in distributed work will be accompanied by an increase in alternative work spaces or incubators where people who do similar work (e.g., high-tech entrepreneurs) decide to work in a central location (e.g., Romero, 2009). This, in combination with the difficulty of managing distributed workers (e.g., Rein, 2014), suggests a perhaps more dire future of distributed work than has long been the dominant assumption.

LIMITATIONS

Although we believe that this research, which combines an inductive approach with a deductive design, offers a strong and rare insight into distributed work dynamics, we are aware of our work's shortcomings. To begin, we acknowledge that this is clearly a beginning of a new approach to research distributed work, especially when considering our methodology. Although we have offered a measurement of offsite work that is quite similar to some measures of teleworking (e.g., Golden et al., 2008), we realize that such measures could eventually include real-time data on work flow, employee movements, and communication patterns in order to generate a work profile that may be used to understand more precisely how work location affects outcomes such as those studied here. We also acknowledge that there are limitations in the survey design. Although we had two samples, there was not a great deal of additional data available from DSP beyond our questions, as such we cannot explore how individual or job characteristics might be related to the reasons for working offsite or choices to work. Further, because these surveys are cross-sectional, we cannot make claims about causality—we can only make claims in which those future choices of where to work should logically flow from these reasons.

There is also concern that those answering the questions in the survey studies were subject to a social desirability bias, in that they wanted those at

the organization to perceive that they were working offsite for "valid" reasons. This could be one explanation for why individuals said that managing work and family demands was *not* one of the reasons why they chose to work offsite. Although participants were told that DSP would not have access to any survey results, it is possible that, due to the solicitation coming from DSP, they wanted to portray that they were working offsite for reasons that were not solely self-interest. However, a social desirability rationale fails to explain why responses like, "It allows me to get more work done" were also not significant.

Finally, there is a question here of generalizability in these studies as we only looked at one organization. Although we attempted in the secondary study to gather data from across DSP to broaden generalizability, this is still mainly applicable to organizations heavily utilizing distributed work such as Yahoo! Many have suggested that as companies look to further cut costs, more and more will be utilizing distributed work arrangements (Cascio, 2000). As DSP is on the forward cusp of global, distributed organizations, this research should be treated as a preview of how individuals may respond to different characteristics of work.

CONCLUSION

We are excited by the prospect of furthering our understanding of how the allowance of offsite work may be one factor leading to more isolation for all members, even those who choose to work onsite at a centralized office. Our findings suggest that these types of flexible work policies may have many benefits for the offsite worker, but some serious drawbacks for those left behind. This may cause us to shift our questions away from why people should telework to why people should work onsite, and what functions offices really serve. If the office is going to become a collection of employees not working together, it essentially becomes no different from a coffee shop (though perhaps with better Internet and worse coffee). By asking these questions we move toward viewing distributed work as a property of larger collectives, which will encourage an examination of how all workers are impacted by such practices.

REFERENCES

Alge, B. J. 2001. Effects of computer surveillance on perceptions of privacy and procedural justice. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 86: 797–804.

Ambrose, M. L., & Alder, G. S. 2000. Designing, implementing, and utilizing computerized performance monitoring: Enhancing organizational justice. In G. R. Ferris (Ed.), ***Research in personnel and human resources management***, vol. 18: 187–219. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Bailey, D. E., & Kurland, N. B. 2002. A review of telework research: Findings, new directions and lessons for the study of modern work. ***Journal of Organizational Behavior***, 23: 383–400.

Baruch, Y., & Holtom, B. C. 2008. Survey response rate levels and trends in organizational research. ***Human Relations***, 61: 1139–1160.

Buono, A. F., & Bowditch, J. L. 2003. ***The human side of mergers and acquisitions: Managing collisions between people, cultures, and organizations***. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Carlson, N. 2013. Why Marissa Mayer told remote employees to work in an office . . . or quit. ***Business Insider.*** Retrieved from http://www.businessinsider.com/why-marissa-mayer-told-remote-employees-to-work-in-an-office--or-quit-2013-2. Accessed July 19, 2014.

Carlson, J. R., & Zmud, R. W. 1999. Channel expansion theory and the experiential nature of media richness perceptions. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 42: 153–170.

Cascio, W. F. 2000. Managing a virtual workplace. ***Academy of Management Executive***, 14: 81–90.

Cooper, C. D., & Kurland, N. B. 2002. Telecommuting, professional isolation, and employee development in public and private organizations. ***Journal of Organizational Behavior***, 23: 511–532.

Cramton, C. D., & Hinds, P. J. 2005. Subgroup dynamics in internationally distributed teams: Ethnocentrism or cross-national learning? ***Research in Organizational Behavior***, 26: 231–263.

Creswell, J. W. 2003. ***Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches***. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Dubrin, A. 1991. Comparison of job satisfaction and productivity of telecommuters vs. in-house employees. ***Psychological Reports***, 68: 1223–1234.

Gajendran, R. S., & Harrison, D. A. 2007. The good, the bad, and the unknown about telecommuting: Meta-analysis of psychological mediators and individual consequences. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 92: 1524–1541.

Global Workplace Analytics. 2013. Retrieved from http://www.globalworkplaceanalytics.com. Accessed July 15, 2014.

Golden, T. D. 2007. Co-workers who telework and the impact on those in the office: Understanding the implications of virtual work for co-worker satisfaction and turnover intentions. ***Human Relations***, 60: 1641–1667.

Golden, T. D., Veiga, J. F., & Dino, R. 2008. The impact of professional isolation on teleworker job performance and turnover intentions: Does time spent

teleworking, interacting face-to-face, or having access to communication-enhancing technology matter? ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 93: 1412–1421.

Hardy, M. 2011. The telework era: Better in theory than in practice. ***Federal Computer Week.*** Retrieved from http://fcw.com/articles/2011/07/25/feat-telework-trials-and-errors.aspx. Accessed March 2, 2014.

Harpaz, I. 2002. Advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting for the individual, organization and society. ***Work Study***, 51: 74–80.

Harrison, A., Wheeler, P., & Whitehead, C. 2004. ***The distributed workplace: Sustainable work environments***. London, UK: Spon Press.

Hertel, G., Geister, S., & Konradt, U. 2005. Managing virtual teams: A review of current empirical research. ***Human Resource Management Review***, 15: 69–95.

Kirkman, B. L., Rosen, B., Tesluk, P. E., & Gibson, C. B. 2004. The impact of team empowerment on virtual team performance: The moderating role of face-to-face interaction. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 47: 175–192.

Kossek, E. E., Lautsch, B. A., & Eaton, S. C. 2006. Telecommuting, control, and boundary management: Correlates of policy use and practice, job control, and work-family effectiveness. ***Journal of Vocational Behavior***, 68: 347–367.

Kozlowski, S. W. J., & Klein, K. J. 2000. A multilevel approach to theory and research in organizations: Contextual, temporal, and emergent processes. In K. J. Klein & S. W. J. Kozlowski (Eds.), ***Multilevel theory, research and methods in organizations: Foundations, extensions, and new directions***: 3–90. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kraut, R. E., Fussell, S. R., Brennan, S. E., & Siegel, J. 2002. Understanding effects of proximity on collaboration: Implications for technologies to support remote collaborative work. In P. J. Hinds & S. Kiesler (Eds.), Distributed work*:* 137–164. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kurland, N. B., & Egan, T. D. 1999. Telecommuting: Justice and control in the virtual organization. ***Organization Science***, 10: 500–513.

Locke, K. 2001. ***Grounded theory in management research***. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Lutz, W. E. 2013. The office is dead: Long live the virtual office. ***shockwaveriderblog.*** Retrieved from http://shockwaveriderblog.wordpress.com/2013/05/04/the-office-is-dead-long-live-the-virtual-office/. Accessed July 15, 2014.

Malhotra, A., & Majchrzak, A. 2004. Enabling knowledge creation in far-flung teams: Best practices for IT support and knowledge sharing. ***Journal of Knowledge Management***, 8: 75–88.

McCloskey, D. W., & Igbaria, M. 1998. A review of the empirical research on telecommuting and directions for future research. In M. Igbaria & M. Tan (Eds.), The virtual workplace*:* 338–358. Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing.

Patton, M. Q. 1990. ***Qualitative evaluation and research methods*** (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Pepitone, J. 2013. Best Buy ends work-from-home program. ***CNN.*** Retrieved from http://money.cnn.com/2013/03/05/technology/best-buy-work-from-home/. Accessed July 19, 2014.

Rein, L. 2014. Patent office filters out worst telework abuses in report to its watchdog. ***Washington Post,*** August 11: A1.

Romero, D. 2009. A new take on incubators. ***Entrepreneur.*** Retrieved from http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/201228. Accessed December 11, 2014.

Rousseau, D. M. 1995. ***Psychological contracts in organizations: Understanding written and unwritten agreements***. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Shamir, B., & Salomon, I. 1985. Work-at-home and the quality of working life. ***Academy of Management Review***, 10: 455–464.

Smith, K. 2013. Here's the confidential memo Yahoo sent employees about working from home. ***Business Insider.*** Retrieved from http://www.businessinsider.com/yahoo-working-from-home-memo-2013-2. Accessed July 19, 2014.

Spradley, J. 1979. ***The ethnographic interview***. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Strang, D., & Soule, S. A. 1998. Diffusion in organizations and social movements: From hybrid corn to poison pill. ***Annual Review of Sociology***, 24: 265–290.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. 1990. ***Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques***. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Sutton, R. I., & Rafaeli, A. 1988. Untangling the relationship between emotion work and organizational sales: The case of convenience stores. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 31: 461–487.

Taris, T. W., & Schreurs, P. J. G. 2009. Well-being and organizational performance: An organizational-level test of the happy-productive worker hypothesis. ***Work and Stress***, 23: 120–136.

Watson-Manheim, M. B., Chudoba, K. M., & Crowston, K. 2002. Discontinuities and continuities: a new way to understand virtual work. ***Information Technology and People***, 15: 191–209.

Weiner, S. P., & Delassio, A. T. 2006. Oversurveying: Causes, consequences, and cures. In A. I. Kraut (Ed.), ***Getting action from organizational surveys: New concepts, methods and applications***: 294–311. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

WorldatWork. 2013. Job flexibility makes employees more loyal. Retrieved from http://www.worldatwork.org/adimComment?id=74059. Accessed January 15, 2014.

Kevin W. Rockmann (krockman@gmu.edu) is an associate professor in the School of Business at George Mason University. He earned his PhD from the University of Illinois. He primarily studies psychological attachment and relationship formation in distributed and other nontraditional work contexts.

Michael G. Pratt (prattmg@bc.edu) is the O'Connor family professor in the Carroll School of Management at Boston College. He earned his PhD from the University of Michigan. His research interests are cross-level and include how people connect to their organizations, professions, and work; in particular, he is interested in the emotional and meaning-making dynamics inherent in these connections.